

TOPTIPS

BLOGGING YOUR CHURCH

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Blogging is a phenomenon that has really taken off in the last couple of years. The word blog is simply an abbreviation of “weblog,” a term used to describe a web sites that is updated frequently, rather like an on-line journal and can range from the personal ramblings of anonymous individuals to the political ideas of world leaders. A blog allows anybody to tell a story and start a conversation.

Church is about telling and living out the greatest story ever told, and so many churches are finding that blogging is a great way to communicate. Many churches have existing web sites that have a tendency to become out of date, are usually dependent on a computer expert and are pretty static. Using a blog encourages the church’s ongoing story to be told, providing a window into the life of a church and encourages conversation. It is pretty easy to achieve too.

So here are some suggestions to get you started:

1

Get your church a blog.

The two most popular blogging tools are WordPress and Blogger, and both are free. You can be blogging in minutes for free at WordPress.com and there are many churches running their entire web site with WordPress. Both tools are designed for anybody to use – you don’t need to be an expert in web design to run a blog.

2

Share the story your church is living.

Share news about events, things going on in your local community and about your passions. Once your blog is set up, you just keep posting about news and events in the church and the community. It’s all about creating a window into your church. The blog format is better suited to this as it encourages an ongoing story to be told and shared.

3

Communicate effectively.

Think about your audience – too many church web sites are aimed at their established congregation. You need to think more widely than this. Don’t make your posts too long either. On the internet the attention span is no more than 10 seconds, so keep your posts to less than 300 words. And use pictures - of people, not empty buildings!

4

Invite conversation.

One of the most powerful features of a blog is the ability to respond to any post by leaving comments. This has huge potential in engaging people in conversation and offers a significant change in the way that churches might communicate, because it is two-way! For example, you could write a post about an issue in your local community and start a conversation, allowing visitors to respond by leaving their comments. This might feel uncomfortable and certainly makes you more vulnerable. Some owners of blogs disable comments because of the risks involved, but in doing so they prevent conversation.

You can find more articles and links about churches blogging with WordPress on Tim's blog at <http://livingos.com>. There is also a great book by Brian Bailey and Terry Storch called *The Blogging Church*. This is a non-technical book that explores some of the issues and potential for using the blog as a means of sharing the church's story.

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